1997

Springs once again ground zero

Family Values seeks vote barring gay rights

WHAT IT DOES

The ordinance proposed by Colorado for Family Values would apply to all city employees. It would mandate that "no persons shall be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex (meaning male or female), national origin, ancestry, age, creed, physical or mental disability, or marriage to a co-worker."

It states that it would "supersede City Council Resolution 78-97" and that "the City of Colorado Springs and its enterprises shall make no additions to this ordinance — whether by ordinance, resolution, or other means — unless first approved by a vote of the people."

By **Michele Ames**/The Gazette

Colorado for Family Values is determined to stop Colorado Springs from offering any civil rights protections to gay men or lesbians on the city payroll.

To prevent any protections from creeping into the Springs, CFV volunteers will be hitting the streets soon seeking voter support for a proposed city ordinance that would mirror federal and state civil rights laws.

More importantly, it would wipe out a Springs City Council resolution, passed in May 1997, that some think offers protection to gay men and lesbians.

And it would prohibit the City Council from amending the list of protected citizens without submitting it, first, to a citywide vote of the electorate.

It seems CFV is concerned that the council's 1997 resolution — which was a nonbinding declaration of the city's position against discrimination — sends the wrong message.

"The fact the media in Colorado and across the nation were now trumpeting news of a 'gay rights' resolution passed in the home of Amendment 2, seemed in itself to cry out for clarification," stated the CFV Report, the group's newsletter.

The resolution is so vaguely written, some on the council and many in legal circles are unsure exactly what groups it is designed to protect. And resolutions don't carry the force of law.

But CFV fears it is the beginning of a movement toward greater rights and protections for gay men and lesbians, such as those "zero-tolerance" anti-discrimination policies adopted in other cities.

And the group has a history of zero tolerance for any government-sanctioned protections for gay men and lesbians.

CFV sponsored Amendment 2 in 1992, which sought to ban laws protecting gay men and lesbians from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. They succeeded in getting it on the statewide ballot and passed it.

See **ORDINANCE**/NEWS3

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About 8:15 a.m. Saturday, Linda Harper began scraping old paint from a picnic table that would later be given a fresh coat of what Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation officials call "trash can brown."

She set aside her day for a number of reasons. But it's her faith and a desire to do community service that probably is at the crux of her motivation.

"We're just letting (local residents) know that we are here, and we want to join with them for the common good of the community," said Harper, who is an 18-year resident of Colorado Springs and a lifetime member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Harper was just one of about 1,500 church members to give up their day to community service projects. The day also honors the church's founding ancestors.

"One of the scriptures says that when you're in the service of your fellow man, you're in the service of your God," said

Alan Thomander, left, and John day at Shooks Run Park as pa 1,500 members of the Church gathered to spruce up several

in Pueblo to do service work.

While the day honoring the ancestors will become an annu event, the church has long bee involved in year-round service projects. Among other things, church members provide help t

Ordinance/Group wants to send message

From NEWS1

The amendment to the Colorado Constitution was labeled nationally as a statewide declaration of hatred. Groups from across the nation condemned the amendment and the state.

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the amendment in 1996 as unconstitutional.

But CFV remains undeterred in its efforts.

The group co-sponsored a recent full-page ad in the New York Times which offered to lead people out of homosexuality.

CFV was listed along with 14 other groups around the nation on an ad that promised to connect individuals with "ex-gay ministries."

But how can the group fight to stamp out homosexuality nationwide when its hometown doesn't even take a hard line on the subject?

The proposed CFV ordinance would do that simply by reaffirming state and federal civil rights legislation by including "race, color, religion, sex (meaning male or female), national origin, ancestry, age, creed, physical or mental disability or marriage to a co-worker."

References to words like "sexual" contained in the council resolution would not be included.

Most cities that pass civil rights legislation, like the proposed ordinance, do it for one of three reasons, according to James Blumstein, a Vanderbilt University School of Law professor and expert in civil rights legislation.

Either the city wants to include classes of people not already in their state or federal laws or they want to increase their ability to beef up enforcement against discrimination or they want to send a symbolic message.

"The question I have is why have another layer of legislation?" said Blumstein. "There may be a symbolic issue here. Folks might say: 'We want to go on record and make a statement about what we believe.' "

That's exactly what the Rev. Paul Jessen, director of Colorado for Family Values, said his group is trying to do, send a message that they don't support gay men and lesbians.

"We have no animus toward homosexuals," Jessen said. "What we object to is being forced to affirm what we cannot affirm and that is the homosexual lifestyle."

Other groups in town, like the Human Rights Coalition, Citizens Project and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People are also concerned about the message this ordinance might send.

"It seems to me we are posing unnecessary discrimination against homosexuals and for no reason," said Willie Breazell, local NAACP chapter president. "Otherwise, it seems to be a really positive step in the right direction for the city."

That's why groups like the Human Relations Coalition and Citizen's Project oppose the proposed ordinance and would rather push for civil rights legislation to cover all residents.

"Yes, there is a need for an ordinance and we would support and encourage a citywide ordinance," said Megan Day, director of Citizen's Project, which monitors a variety of community issues. "But I don't think that we need an ordinance that is specifically aimed at excluding certain segments of our community from civil rights."

Cities such as Denver, Boulder, Aspen and Telluride have already passed legislation that includes sexual orientation as a protected class.

Although CFV would never agree to protection for gay men and lesbians, group leaders said they would not have proposed the ordinance if the City Council had opened the issue for public debate.

CFV tried to get the Springs council to "clarify" its resolution by explaining publicly what the word "sexual" in the resolution meant.

Group members convinced Councilman Dawson Hubert to address the resolution in March. But his attempt failed when no one else on the council supported reopening the debate.

So, in May, Jessen's group submitted a proposed ordinance to replace the resolution covering city employees.

The group must now garner at least 11,085 signatures by Dec. 14. If they do, the proposed ordinance will come before the City Council for a vote. The council can then make it law or place it on the April 1998 ballot for public vote.

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enjoyed American fare such as barbecue and corn on the cob.

When the heat got unbearable, some folks bought ice cream and tall cups of lemonade and settled down in the grass to watch the intricate footing of athletic, kilted dancers compete against each other.

In the background was the ever-present hum and thump of bagpipe bands.

On the athletic field, beefy men threw cabers — logs — that were 17 feet long and weighed 130 pounds. Nobody teased those fellows about what was under their kilts.

Nearby, their buff female counterparts were hefting and then tossing 20- to 50-pound weights in another competition.

Clan tents were sprinkled over the upper field and quickly filled with lively discussion about who belonged to what family and how intricate the family's tartan — or plaid pattern particular to a family — is woven.

"A lot of people are interested in finding out about their roots," said Elaine Sherman of Denver.

Sherman helped visitors to the Clan Douglas tent, one of many that provided specific information about family genealogy.

The clan tents help people discover from what part of Scotland their ancestors hail as well as information and history of particular clans.

"Most of us have ancestors that came from another country," Sherman said. "It gives you a sense of family, a sense of belonging."

It's personal history. For some, it's a change of pace.

Brian Davis, a college student who came to watch his girlfriend in the dance competition, said it's a chance to travel without leaving home.

"People want to celebrate their heritage," he said. "If they can't go to Scotland, why not bring it here?"

Pauline Jacobs and Greg Krasovec also were drawn to the event because of an interest in Gaelic culture. Both are a wee bit Irish and love bagpipe music.

"People are proud of their heritage, those that know it," Jacobs said.

Krasovec felt that those who aren't of Gaelic ancestry could have fun at the festival, too.

"It's just something nice for the family to enjoy."

Dick Milne of Littleton leans on his clan sign after marching in the Parade of Clans. Clan tents dotted a Coronado High School field Saturday.

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